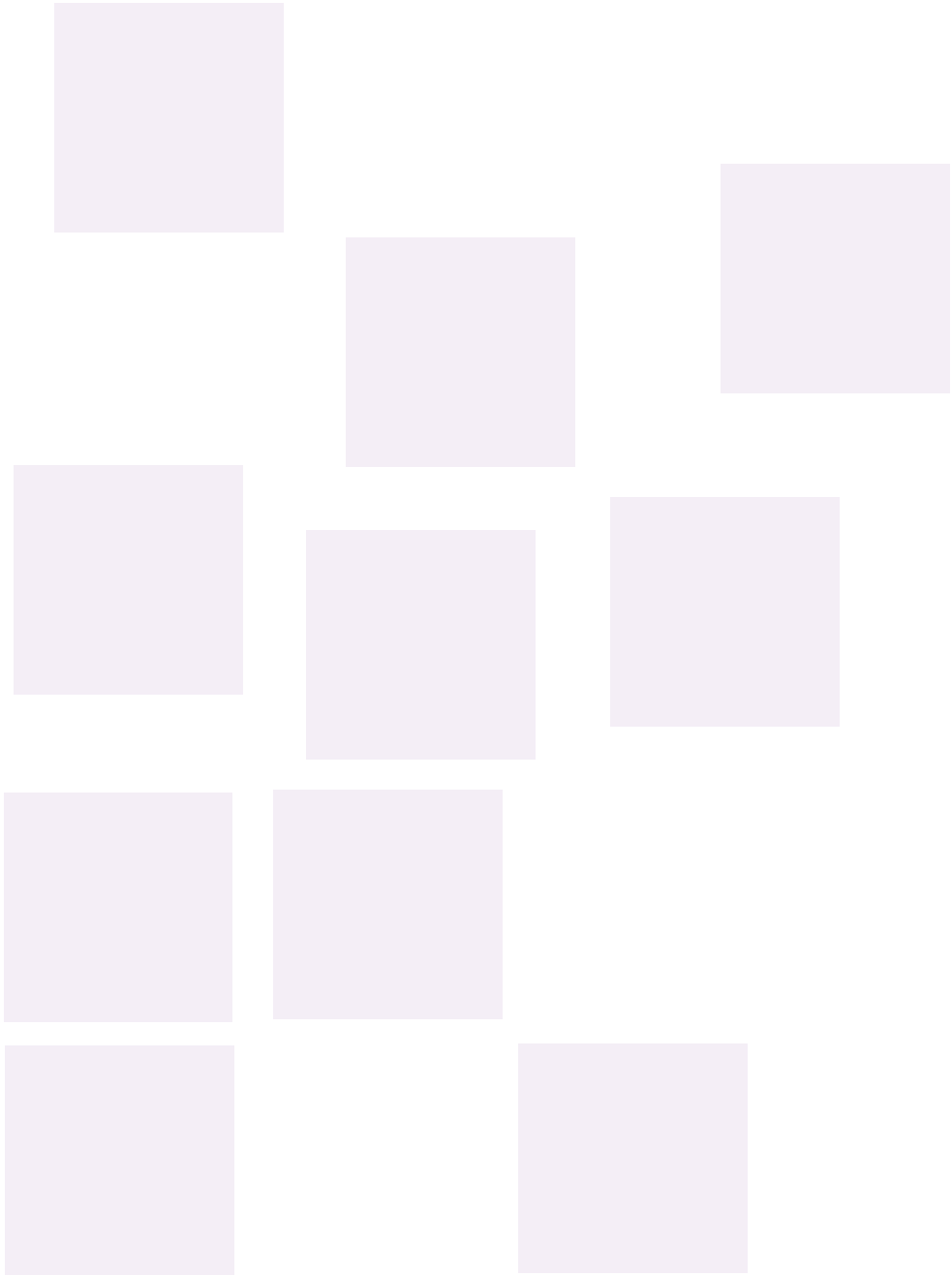

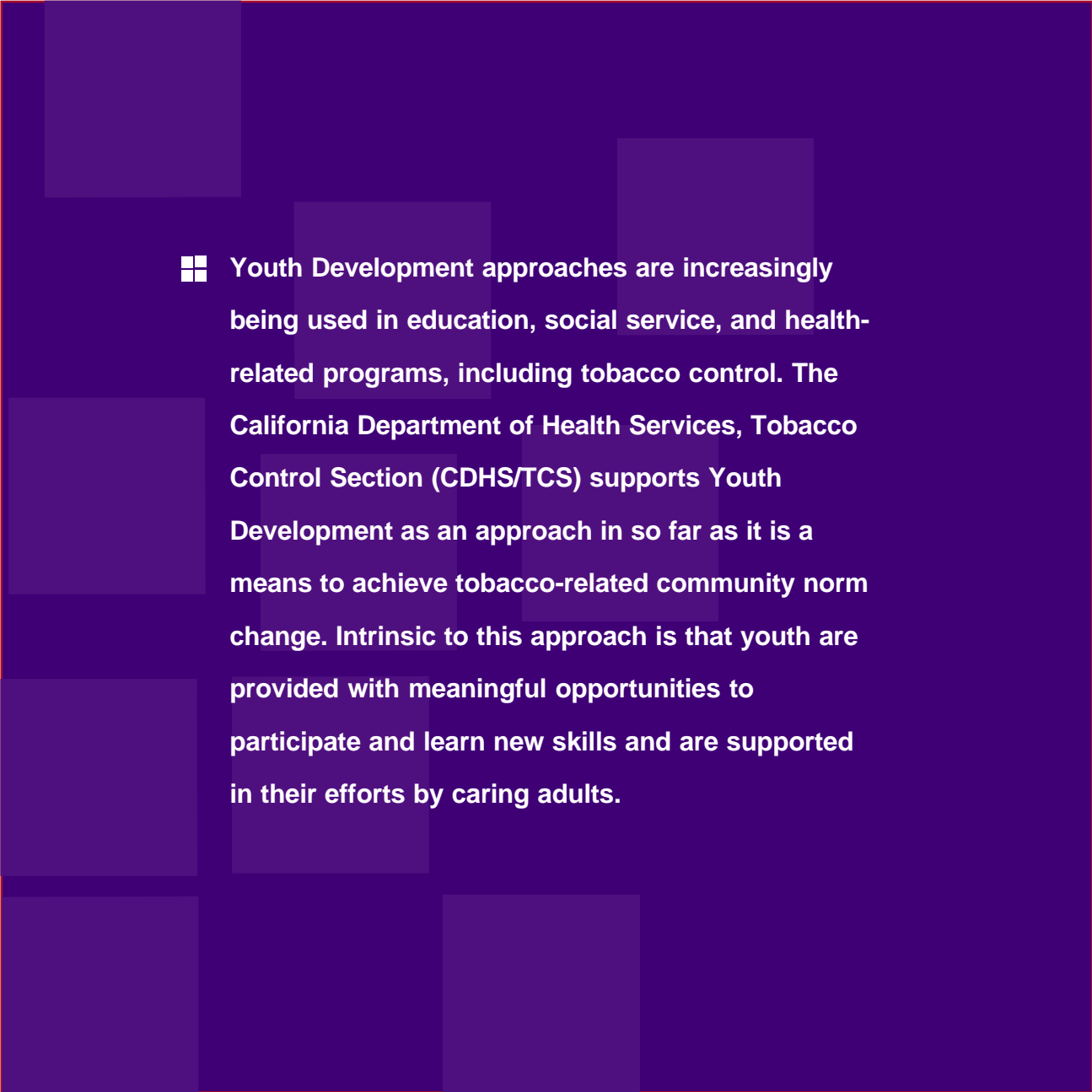


The background features a decorative geometric pattern consisting of several squares arranged in a staggered, grid-like fashion. Each square contains a different pattern of purple and white shapes, including triangles, circles, and V-shapes. The squares are outlined in a thin purple line. The overall color scheme is purple and white on a light gray background.

The Youth Development Approach in the California Tobacco Control Program

California Department of
Health Services



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- Youth Development approaches are increasingly being used in education, social service, and health-related programs, including tobacco control. The California Department of Health Services, Tobacco Control Section (CDHS/TCS) supports Youth Development as an approach in so far as it is a means to achieve tobacco-related community norm change. Intrinsic to this approach is that youth are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate and learn new skills and are supported in their efforts by caring adults.

■ Youth Development

Youth Development can be defined as, “...the ongoing growth process in which all youth are engaged in attempting to (1) meet their basic personal and social needs to be safe, feel cared for, be valued, be useful, and be spiritually grounded, and (2) to build skills and competencies that allow them to function and contribute in their daily lives.”¹ In short, it is a process in which youth have basic needs met and gain skills that can help them be successful now and in the future.

A Youth Development approach provides support and opportunities to help youth meet their needs and learn appropriate skills. It enables youth to develop and grow as people in a safe environment with the guidance of caring adults. As

applied to tobacco control efforts in California, a Youth Development approach enables youth to create or support social norms that make tobacco use less acceptable. In utilizing this approach, caution must be exercised to ensure that tobacco control resources are not being allocated to overly-broad youth-focused activities that do not relate to tobacco control.

Youth have a number of basic needs to be met and key competencies to acquire that are critical to their healthy development.² These are listed below with a description of how tobacco control programs can enable youth participants to meet these needs and build necessary skills and competencies.

Youth Development:
A process in which youth have basic needs met and gain skills that can help them be successful now and in the future.

¹ Pittman, K., O'Brien, R. & Kimball, M. *Youth Development and Resiliency Research: Making Connections to Substance Abuse Prevention*. Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development, February 1993.

² EMT, “The Youth Development Approach: Looking for What’s RIGHT with Adolescents,” *Prevention Tactics*, 2:2, page 1. Adapted from Pittman and Wright (1991), *Ongoing Emotional Support*.

■ Needs

Youth have a need to feel positive about themselves.

■ Safety

Youth have a need to feel physically and emotionally safe. Participation in tobacco control coalition meetings and/or well-planned tobacco control activities in a safe, supportive environment can provide youth participants with a feeling of physical safety and security. In addition, organized tobacco control activities can provide youth with a sense that there is additional “structure” in their lives.

■ Self-Worth

Youth have a need to feel positive about themselves. By participating in a meaningful public health movement that works to improve their community and enhance the well being of its members, youth can gain an increased sense of self-worth.

■ Mastery

Youth have a need to feel they have valued skills and abilities. By participating in tobacco control activities, youth receive training and gain experience in a variety of areas, such as public speaking, media relations, video production, etc. The end result is the acquisition of new skills and the opportunity to apply these skills to a larger cause.

■ Autonomy

Youth have a need to feel that they are unique and that they can succeed in the world. In the course of participating in tobacco control activities, youth are involved in issues and engaged in actions that allow them to discover personal likes and dislikes and develop individual abilities. They also can see the impact of their tobacco control efforts on their environment.

■ Belonging

Youth have a need to be part of a social group. Youth participants can make new friends and connections with other youth in the tobacco control movement. They become part of a new social group whose members have a shared interest and purpose.

■ Self-Awareness/Spirituality

Youth have a need to be part of a larger system that provides a sense of meaning or purpose to their lives. By being involved in tobacco control, youth become part of a large-scale public health movement that can provide them with a sense that they are part of something much bigger than themselves.

Tobacco control offers youth the opportunity to broaden their social horizons.

■ Competencies

Youth can develop and maintain a sense of personal well being by developing a heightened sense of purpose.

■ Health

Through their involvement in tobacco control, youth can gain more detailed knowledge of the physical harm that tobacco can cause to those who smoke or chew and to those exposed to secondhand smoke. In addition, youth gain the ability to recognize and counter the predatory marketing and promotional practices of the tobacco industry.

■ Social

Tobacco control offers youth the opportunity to broaden their social horizons. They learn to interact in new ways and in new social situations (e.g. negotiations with policy makers or presentations at school board meetings). They also learn how to cope with difficult situations and individuals with opposing points of view.

■ Intellectual

Tobacco control offers youth the opportunity to further develop their oral and written language abilities, solve problems, and be creative. Through participation in tobacco control advocacy activities, youth gain an understanding of social policies, how they are formed, and how they affect social and commercial behavior.

■ Vocational

Youth involved in tobacco control learn skills, such as public speaking, writing, and media relations, which may assist them in their future careers. They also have the chance to meet and learn from individuals from a variety of fields, including social service organizations, local and state government, and law enforcement. In addition, participation in tobacco control programs may increase the likelihood that youth become tobacco control advocates/professionals as adults.

■ Citizenship

Working on a community issue, such as tobacco control, enables youth to gain a better understanding of the nature of their neighborhood, city, or county and the issues that are important to its members. It also enables youth to contribute to the greater good of their communities.

■ Mental Health

Youth can develop and maintain a sense of personal well being by developing a heightened sense of purpose, gaining knowledge and skills, and meeting new people through involvement in tobacco control programs.



Community vs. Individual Level Change

A Youth Development approach can create positive changes in youth, and the nature and extent of those changes can be important factors to track through evaluation. However, such broad developmental changes at the individual level are not the ultimate outcome for tobacco control programs in California. California's Tobacco Control Program follows the traditional public health model that focuses on creating change at the community or population level and only secondarily at the individual level. For example, the Program has focused primarily on creating smoke-free workplaces, public places, and homes rather than on increasing individual knowledge regarding the dangers of second-hand smoke. The outcomes

tracked for evaluation purposes focus more often on how the community, rather than the individual, is different as a result of the intervention.

Because CDHS/TCS-funded programs emphasize community-level tobacco control outcomes, CDHS/TCS does not fund projects aimed directly at producing individual-level changes, such as increased resiliency attributes, in youth. CDHS/TCS-funded projects may track such individual-level changes as part of their process evaluation activities; however, these changes may not be the ultimate outcome of their tobacco control interventions.

The key to successful Youth Development programs is to involve youth in a meaningful fashion.




Youth Development in Action

The roles of youth and adult tobacco control project staff in Youth Development projects may vary. Generally, the youth act as educators and advocates, interacting with media and policy makers, and planning and carrying out specific activities. Adults help identify the parameters of the project, facilitate planning, help keep the youth on track, and provide logistical support and training so the youth can succeed at their activities. The most successful Youth Development programs utilize the following principles:

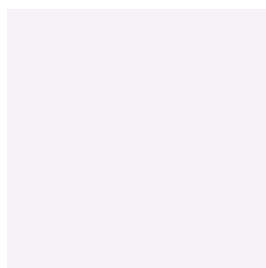
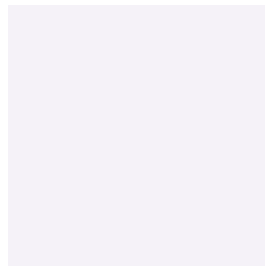
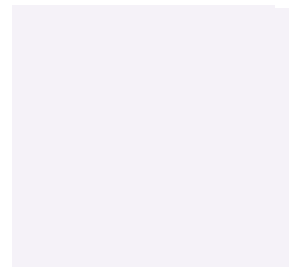
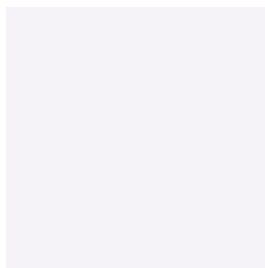
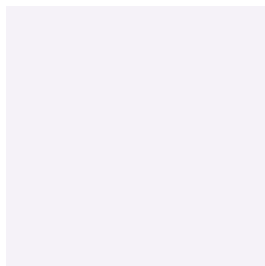
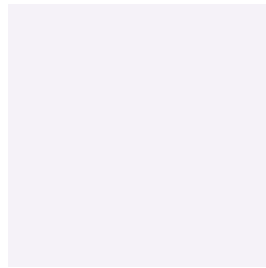
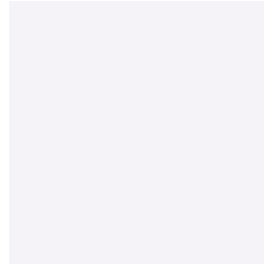
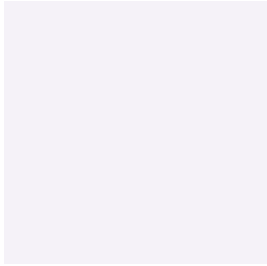
- Give youth a voice and ask for their involvement;
- Give decision-making power/ authority to youth;
- Make the project fun;
- Offer meaningful opportunities;
- Provide a safe and positive environment;
- Encourage youth/adult partnerships;
- Offer training that is relevant, experiential and interactive;
- Provide opportunities for reflection and feedback; and
- Acknowledge youth personally and publicly.

The key to successful Youth Development programs is to involve youth in a meaningful fashion and provide a supportive environment with appropriate training and guidance that will enable them to meet needs and develop skills and competencies. An example is a youth coalition working to help get a tobacco control policy adopted. The youth participants decide as a group whether this is a project they want to undertake. If it is, the youth, with assistance from adults, plan activities, such as conducting observational surveys, participating in letter writing campaigns, educating policy makers, and organizing press events. The adults and experienced youth provide training and guidance on topics such as conducting a survey, public speaking, and interacting with the media. The youth then conduct the activities, while the adults provide needed support, such as transportation to and from events. Following the activities, the youth and adults provide feedback on their efforts, and the adults have a recognition event for the youth at a coalition meeting or other public venue. As a result of their efforts, a policy will hopefully be adopted and the youth will have gained experiences in a supportive environment that will enable them to proceed on the path of healthy development.



■ CDHS/TCS supports the use of a Youth Development approach to tobacco control as a process, not an outcome. Youth are a vital part of California communities and should be an equally vital part of tobacco control efforts throughout the state. A youth development approach in tobacco control enables youth to continue their personal growth while creating positive change in their communities. The end result is healthier youth and a stronger tobacco control movement in California.

**This report was made possible by funds from
the Tobacco Tax Health Protection Act 1998 -
Proposition 99.**



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